A SERMON

Preach'd at

TURNERS-HALL,

The 5th. of *MAY*, 1700.

By *GEORGE KEITH*.

In which he gave an Account of his joyning in Communion with the Church of *England*.

With some Additions and Enlargements made by Himself.

LONDON:

Printed by *W. Bowyer*, for *Brab. Aylmer* at the *Three Pigeons* in *Cornhil*, and *Char. Brome* at the *Gun* at the West-End of St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1700.

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Preach'd at

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The 5th of MAY, 1702.

By GEORGE KEITH.

In which he gives an Account of his Joyning in Communion with the Church of England.

With some Reflections and Enlargements made by himself.

LONDON:

Printed by J. Sowle for Benj. Bragg, at the Three Pigeons in Cornhill, and Tho. Brown at the Gun at the West-End of St. Paul's Church-yard. 1702.

1 PETER iii. 16.

Having a good Conſcience; that whereas they ſpeak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good Converſation in Chriſt.

THE laſt Lord's Day I made the former Verſe of this Chapter the Subject of what I then ſaid in this Place; which I ſhall not repeat: only let me put you in mind, that I told you who were then preſent, That it was the Duty of every one who profeſſeth himſelf to be a Chriſtian, to be ready to give to every Man that asketh him, a Reaſon of the Hope that is in him. Under which Term [*Hope*] by a *Synecdoche* of a part for the whole, is comprehended and underſtood our whole Faith and Religion, and all our religious Actions and Performances, for all which, as we ought to be able to give a Reaſon or Ground why we ſo believe, hope, act, and why we ſo profeſs, to our own Hearts and Conſciences; ſo we ought alſo to be able and ready to give the like Reaſon or Ground of the ſame to others that ask it of us, (which yet ſuffers ſome Limitation that I ſhall not now repeat) to the end, that by the ſame, they may be convinced to embrace the ſame way with us, as God is pleaſed to make us inſtrumental, by the Operation of his Holy Spirit, to produce that effect, or at leaſt to put to ſilence their unjuſt Clamours againſt us.

But the chief thing is, with good Reaſon, to be perſuaded in our own Conſciences, that what we ſo believe, hope, or act, is true and right, is approved in the ſight of God; and in that we ſhall have Peace.

In the opening of the Words of this 16th Verſe, I purpoſe to anſwer theſe three Queſtions; I. What Conſcience is. II. What a good Conſcience is, and how a good Conſcience is diſtinguiſhed from an evil Conſcience. III. What the Rule of a good Conſcience is, according to which it ought to be directed and guided.

To the firſt, I anſwer, Conſcience is that Power or Faculty of our reaſonable Soul or Mind, that can and doth reflect on our Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, both preſent and paſt, ſo as to judge and determine concerning them, whether they be really or apparently right or wrong, good or evil, juſtifiable or reproveable. Hence, *Rom.* 2. 15.

the Conſcience of the Heathen, or Gentiles, is ſaid *to bear witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while to accuſe or excuſe one another.*

To the ſecond, I anſwer, There are ſeveral things altogether neceſſary to denominate a Man's Conſcience to be good.

1. It muſt be an enlightned Conſcience, with a good meaſure of true Knowledge, whereby to know what is right and good, or wrong and evil. An ignorant Conſcience cannot be good.

2. The Obedience of the Heart and Will of Man to what he is convinc'd of his Duty either to be believ'd or practis'd, is neceſſary to denominate the Conſcience to be a good Conſcience: for though true Conviction and Knowledge are neceſſary, yet that alone, without Obedience, is not ſufficient to denominate the Conſcience to be good; even though the Knowledge and Conviction come from the Spirit of God, there muſt be a Conſent and Harmony betwixt the Underſtanding and the Will to conſtitute and denominate the Conſcience to be good.

3. The Conſcience that is purged and juſtified by the Blood of Chriſt, even the Blood of his Croſs, that was outwardly ſhed, *through Faith in that Blood*, Rom. 3. 25. and where the Heart and Conſcience, and whole Soul and Body, is ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and the inward work of Regeneration is known by the Spirit of God, the Conſcience only of ſuch a Man is a good Conſcience; I ſay, that the Conſcience muſt be purged by the Blood of Chriſt, that it may be good. See *Heb.* 9. 13, 14. *For if the blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the aſhes of an Heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh; how much more ſhall the Blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without Spot to God, purge your Conſciences from dead works, to ſerve the living God.* And the Faith which is in the Blood of Chriſt, *Rom.* 3. 25. is wrought in us, and generally in all who have it, by means of the *written Word*; that is to ſay, by the Doctrine of Chriſt crucified, and the ſpiritual Bleſſings we have by him, as it is preached to us; for, as the Scripture ſaith, *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word, and that Word is the outward Word, as it is in the mouth of the Preachers*, as it followeth in *Rom.* 10. 14. *And how ſhall they hear without a Preacher, and how ſhall they preach unleſs they be ſent?* Hence the Word, even the doctrinal Word, is called *the incorruptible Seed, of which true Believers are regenerated and born again*, according to 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. And Chriſt, in the Parable, compar'd his Preaching to the People *to the Husbandman that ſoweth his ſeed in the ſeveral ſorts of ground*, Matth. 13. 3.

* *Among the Quakers.*

There are a great * many, who think they have a good Conſcience, but they have no need of *the Blood of Chriſt*,

nor

not of Faith in it; they will have *the Object of their Faith only within them*; they find no need of having the Conſcience ſprinkled by the Blood of Chriſt without them; nay, they argue againſt it, as an impoſſible Notion, not conſidering that this Sprinkling is ſpiritually by Faith, *and not by any material Application*. Alſo they have a wrong Notion of Faith; they think they have no need of the *written Word*, or any *outward Means* or Helps, to have this Faith wrought in them: *The Spirit or Light within, alone, doth all; the Light within them is ſufficient to Salvation, without any thing elſe; the Light within them is whole Chriſt, God and Man, Fleſh, and Spirit, and Bone.* They need no Chriſt without them, nor no written Word without them; they can Preach, Pray, Believe, without Book, without all outward Helps; *they need no Crutches*, as ſome argue againſt *Forms of Prayer*, and call them *Crutches* to lame Perſons, which whole and ſound Men need not. So others make no more of the *written Word*, the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel, as outwardly delivered us in the Holy Scriptures, *but as Crutches which they have no need of at all.*

They will not allow of any written Word at all, or any outward Word; they ask where we find a written Word in Scripture? I tell them, I find it in *John* 15. 25. where Chriſt calleth a ſhort Sentence that he quoted out of a Pſalm of *David*, ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος, i. e. *that written Word.* They ſay, they call the Scripture what it calleth it ſelf, to wit, a Treatiſe; for which they quote *Acts* 1. 1. *the former Treatiſe*; but had they underſtood or conſulted the *Greek*, they would have found it, τὸν πρῶτον λόγον, i. e. *the former Word*, whereby he underſtands the whole Book of the Goſpel according to St. *Luke*.

Now as to the diſtinction betwixt a good and evil Conſcience, of which alſo the Scripture ſpeaks. 1. An evil Conſcience is an ignorant Conſcience. 2. Unfaithfulneſs, and Diſobedience to what a Man is convinced of, renders the Conſcience to be evil. 3. Unbelief, and want of Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, makes the Conſcience evil. 4. Not to follow the dictates of Conſcience, even when it errs, is an evidence of an evil Conſcience. Here that *Axiom* takes place, *Conſcientia errans ligat ſed non obligat*, an erring Conſcience ties but doth not oblige; it is a great pinch and ſtrait: He that follows not an erring Conſcience ſinneth, becauſe he acts not in Faith, and *what is not of faith is ſin*; and when he followeth his erring Conſcience he ſinneth. This is no new Doctrine, however poſſibly it may ſo ſeem to ſome here; it is that which every Caſuiſt doth commonly teach: I will illuſtrate it to you by a Similitude that ſome have given. If a Subject be deceived by a counterfeit Meſſenger from his Prince, who

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which are gentle and safe, and full of Consolation, declaring that he will pardon the Sins of all that sincerely repent, and truly believe the Gospel of Christ, and sincerely resolve and endeavour to keep his Commands, and give to them eternal Life upon those Terms God has graciously promised to help every one of us to perform by the Offer and Gift of his Holy Spirit, as it accompanies the preaching of the Gospel.

But these new Terms of the Covenant of Grace, the Light, as it is an universal Principle in all Men, by whatsoever Name they will call it, or whatsoever Worth they will ascribe to it, both Scripture and common Experience doth tell us, doth not teach them: *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments, they have not known them*, Psal. 147. 19, 20.

The Jews had this Advantage over the Heathen World, that *unto them were committed the Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 2. the *exceeding great and precious Promises*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. which the Heathen World, to whom the Gospel was not preached, had not: and we have that Advantage now that the Jews then had. But the Gentiles being *without* the Gospel, are said to be *without God and Christ in the World*, Ephes. 2. 12. i. e. without an Interest in God and Christ, and without Hope: Aliens and Strangers to the Commonwealth of *Israel*. The highest Acts of Obedience to *any Light within* us, without the Gospel, and without Faith in Christ crucified and raised again, do not denominate us the Children of God, nor prove us to have any just Title or Claim to the eternal Inheritance; for whosoever are the Children of God, they are so *by Faith in Jesus Christ*, as the Scripture expressly declareth, Gal. 3. 26. And the Gospel requireth, that to obtain Salvation, we must confess with our Mouths, and believe with our Hearts, that God hath raised Christ from the dead, Rom. 10. 8, 9. even him who died for our Sins, who was delivered for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification. But *the Light within*, as it is an universal Principle, teacheth not Men these things, these great Mysteries of our Salvation, these lively Oracles, these great and precious Promises, nor these great Fundaments of the Christian Religion, such as the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the perfect Atonement and Satisfaction that Christ hath made to the divine Justice and Law for our Sins by his bloody Passion and Death, his Ascension and Exaltation, and Mediation for us at the right hand of God in the glorified Nature of Man, consisting of a glorified Soul and Body, and thus he is to be the Judge of the Quick and the Dead. Also there are divers positive Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, that *the Light within*, as it is an universal Principle,

teacheth

teacheth us nothing of. The Knowledge and Faith of all these things are given us by the written Word preached and read outwardly, and by the special Illumination of the Holy Spirit inwardly working in us a firm Perswasion and Faith of them, giving us a savoury understanding and relish of them, and great Joy and Consolation through hope by the Knowledge and Faith of them.

It proceeds from great Ignorance and Errour in many, that they will not allow any real distinction betwixt the *common Illumination* given to all Mankind, and the *special Illumination* given to Believers in the crucified Jesus: Some will allow a distinction in *degree*, but not in *kind* or *specie*; but I say, they differ in *kind* or *specie*, (though both come from one and the same Fountain, the Father of Lights, from whom all good Gifts flow, both natural, and spiritual, and supernatural) because they discover differing Objects, *i. e.* differing Truths, by way of Object, that differ from these few Truths discovered by the common Illumination, specifically or in kind; for whatever Truth, or Truths the common Illumination discovers to Heathens of the Being, and Power, and Providence of God, *as Creator*, and the Duty of Mankind to him as such, the holy Scriptures without, and the special Illumination of the holy Spirit within, discovers far other and greater Mysteries of Truth, in the inestimable Love of God by the Redemption of the World through Jesus Christ, and the Duty that we owe to God and Christ thereby, in the Belief of his Word and Promises, the Obedience to his Commands, and especially all and every of them given under the New Testament, as that of Baptism and the Supper, Obedience and Subjection to Christ's Government and Discipline he has established in his Church, and to all whom he has set up to have the Rule over us, in his House and Church.

But whereas they plead for the Sufficiency of the *Light within*, and *its Dictates*, without the means of Scripture, and all outward teaching, to qualifie Men to be Christians and Saints, and Heirs of eternal Salvation, from *Jerem.* 31. 33. where God promised to put his Law in the inward parts, making the Law writ or put in the heart, *Jerem.* 31. 33. to be the same, and of the same extent, and the same manner of heart, and manner of writing, with that in *Rom.* 2. 15. This is a miserable Mistake, and a very gross and mischievous Errour. That in *Jerem.* 31. 33. respects the People and Church of God; but that in *Rom.* 2. 15. respects the Heathen World.

The Law writ in the hearts of the Heathen World, teaching the moral Duties of Temperance, Justice, and general Piety towards God as Creator, is I grant, without the means or help of Scripture, and ante-

antecedent to it; [illegible] the Law of God [illegible]
hearts of Believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe [illegible]
effect [illegible] peculiar to the Christian Dispensation, as [illegible]
the Form of the Gospel, and to the positive Ordinances [illegible]
of Circumcision and the Passover, and others after [illegible]
are not writ in our hearts without Scripture, nor antecedent to Scripture, but collateral to Scripture, and by means of Scripture; those positive and peculiar Laws of the Gospel, writ in the hearts of true Lovers, and deeply printed and engraven in them, are no other than the Copy or Transcript of the Laws outwardly written or printed in the holy Scriptures, which come to be transcribed into our hearts by what we duly and frequently hear preached to us, and read out of the holy Scriptures; and what we read out of books out of them, the Spirit of God working with the Reading and Hearing, and reading, and hearing, and well pondering and meditating what we hear or read, enabling it to take deep and living Impression on our hearts, and making our hearts that were dead before, now to be alive and renewed to receive that Impression, and yet so solid, firm, and tenacious as to retain it, being as a Nail fix'd in a sure place by the Masters of Assemblies, given by one Shepherd. *Eccles.* 12. 11. But is not the heart of Unbelievers of Heathen Gentiles, whose heart is a heart of Stone, like the heart of every sincere Believer is a heart of flesh, according to Ezek. 11. 19. and 36. 26, 27. compared with 2 Cor. 3. 3. But, by some, cannot the Spirit teach us without Books, even without the Scripture? Some argue for the sufficiency of the Light within, and say, Yea, it can, I answer; and so can the Spirit [illegible] Books, but they cannot well learn [illegible] descended to the weak capacity of [illegible] Books, so doth the Spirit condescend to us weak [illegible] by the written Word.

[illegible] concerning [illegible] the New Testament, [illegible] Gospel [illegible] &c. and Gods Elect [illegible] all ages [illegible] are such, that [illegible] to [illegible] Salvation, [illegible] to [illegible] did not rejoice in Christ, [illegible] for this, according to 1 Pet. 1. 8. [illegible] *that have not seen, and yet have believed.* The Saints [illegible] the Law [illegible] Salvation [illegible] in [illegible] Salvation, [illegible] and that Love [illegible] would be too [illegible] in us,

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breach of charity, I say first, that for their ignorance and ignorant opposition to those of any of the Sect of Christ's Communion they shall have a better degree or charity in the Kingdom of Heaven, than they would have had

I have now done with what I had to say in answer to these several Questions; I shall only observe one particular from the words of the Text, which is this,

That it hath oft been, and is the Lot of good men, having a good Conscience, to be wrongfully judged, misrepresented, and falsly accused, both Scripture and History abounds with Examples to prove this, as in the case of *Joseph*, *Moses*, *David*, and *Daniel*, and many of the Prophets; and in the case of *John Baptist*, and our Saviour, *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said he was a Devil; Christ came eating and drinking with Publicans and Sinners, and they said of him, gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber*; to which my Case formerly resembles. These last Years past my Adversaries among the *Quakers* reproached me, that I was of no Communion, neither *Quaker*, nor *Presbyterian*, nor *Independent* nor *Baptist*, nor of the *Church of England*, and unless I would declare my self to be of some particular Communion, they would not dispute with me, nor regard me, to answer me, though I told them I was a Christian, and a Member of the Catholick Church of Christ, and have great charity for all the sincere that hold the Head in all the several Communions of Professions; but this would not satisfie, but they would insult and sought to trample me under their feet, but God supported me.

But now again, when with a good Conscience, being purged by God's enlightning and my scrables, and being fully resolved by diligent Examination and mature Deliberation I have declared my self to be for the *Church of England*, and have join'd in Communion with her, they do as much reproach and revile me, and falsly accuse me as formerly, and so would they have done to any other, of any of the *Dissenters*; but I bless God I have a good Conscience, and my care hath been as I hope ever shall be to keep it void of offence to God, and my own Conscience, and therefore I need not be much concern'd what my Adversaries or any other unreasonable persons [illegible] of me. I am confirmed upon the words of the Text, that [illegible] Christian [illegible] shall be [illegible] manner of evil [illegible] falsly [illegible] my Conversation [illegible] Religion which God hath been pleased to give me, and who has greatly

greatly supported and strengthened me, opposed and railed against their vile Errours, and this is all the cause of their hatred against me, and that God has been pleased to bless and prosper my mean Labours with some Success, so that both in *America* where and here in *England*, both in City and Country, divers have come from Quakerism and gone over to the Church of *England* with me, yea divers have prevented me, and gone before me; and divers here, I hope, will go along with me. I also remember what Christ said, *John 16. 2. The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service.* Persecutors commonly follow an erring Conscience: few Persecutors, and be sure they are of the worst sort that knowingly and wilfully persecute the Servants of God.

Having thus far proceeded according to the Doctrine I mentioned at the beginning of this Discourse, on the foregoing Verse, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. I think it my Duty, and a weighty Concern lyeth upon me, to give to this Auditory the Reason of the Hope that is in me, of my Faith and Perswasion in this very particular, Why I have joined in Communion with the Church of *England*, although I retain Charity to all the honest-hearted of other Communions, hoping that in God's due time, the more Sincere will follow my Example, and that God will make all the Sincere to be not only of one Faith, (as many at present are) but of one Way and Practice, and Uniformity, Worship, and Church Discipline, to as with one mouth, and one heart and mind, to glorifie God. *Rom.* 15. 6. This will be a joyful Day, which I hope many here, and elsewhere, pray for. Why then will ye not help it forward by your good Examples, laying aside all weak and insufficient Scruples, which upon due Examination, will be found without just ground? And why find ye fault with those that begin to give you good Example? Though this Change of mine is not so great as some imagine, I was never so uncharitable as I find some are, though I grant, I have been too uncharitable, which I have retracted: I have been for a considerable time very charitable to all sober and religious Protestants of all sorts, and have oft in secret, bewail'd their Opposition one to another, perceiving that in great part it came more from Prejudice of Judgment and Education than any just Cause. I date not my Conversion to Christianity from this Change, nay, not from my first turning to the Quakers. My gracious God began early to deal with me, and turn'd my Heart towards him. I was well instructed in the Fundamentals of Christianity, by the good Education I had, (for which I praise God) before I knew the Quakers, and though in too many things I was misled by them, being deceived by their high pretences to Perfection,

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on, and Unjust Reflections, by which they have deterred many people
as me, and I confess, I found it one of the hardest things in the
world, and did confidently perswade my self, which I can ingenuously
both by my private Books from time to time, and divers Manuscripts,
and from my Childhood to this day, God has in mercy preserved me
from all fundalous Conversation and Principles, a present sense of good
Credit are ready to give a Testimony, who have known me for fourty
six Years past, and my manner of Conversation.

I am the more concerned to give the reason of my said Change, chiefly
for the sake of some of my good friends here present, who through
the Blessing of God have been by me, as an instrument, brought off
from the Quakers Errours, that were opposite to the Fundamentals of
Christianity, yet have been scrupling Scruples that as yet hinder
them from so grateful a joining with the Church of England, and seem
to be concerned with my joining with her, which I hope God in his
time will remove; and to that end it will be fit for me, I will endeavour
as his instrument, to do something to them, as also for the more con-
firming of such who are cordially ready to join with me. And in the
same place, to silence the unjust Clamours, and false Accusations of my
professed Adversaries, and others, ignorantly prejudiced against me,
and seduced to let them know that I have good reason for what I have
done, and have acted as a rational Christian Man ought to do.

A chief Reason therefore which I offer is this: Suppose these were
a parity or equality in all other respects between the Difference and the
Church of England, I mean the more sound and sattending among them,
as in Doctrine and Worship, Sacraments and Church-Government, Dis-
cipline and Constitution of Members; yet this with me (with all the
Balance, and I think ought to cast the balance with any rational consi-
deration) that on that supposition, the minority or lesser number should
yield to the majority or greater number, and the younger should yield
to the elder, and the Daughters to the Mother. For, certain it is, that
the Church of England, as she was in King Edward VI. and Queen Eli-
zabeth's time, and in Queen Mary's time, was the Mother Protestant
Church. The Dissenters themselves had their Christianity, Baptism,
and Christian Education and Profession in her Communion, and were
nursed as it were in her Arms, and suckled at her Breasts, and for
some fobs of all Differences will say, she was a true Church then, in
all the main things of Religion. Now unless they can prove that she
is changed from what she then was, either in Doctrine, or Sacraments,
or Worship, or Discipline, or Church-Government, in any material
things, from Scripture, which I think they cannot do, how can
they justifie their Separation from her?

And

and I think to my Satisfaction, that the wiser Men and ablest in solid Learning and Piety, and in the truest Knowledge of the Scriptures to instruct the Ignorant, and convince or put to silence Opposers, to refute Antichristian and Popish Errors, as well as all other old and late Heresies, are much more numerous to be found in the Church of *England*, and what solid Learning the ablest of the Dissenters have had, so far as they have acquired by outward means, has been originally by means of Church of *England* Men. She hath been all along, and still is the greatest Bulwark against Popery, (wherein she hath given sufficient Proof from time to time, wherein the many elaborate and excellent Books and Tracts written by her Members) against Popery especially, and other old and new Heresies, as Deism, Atheism, &c. yea, let the Libraries and Closets of the generality of the Dissenters Ministers be searched, who are the more knowing and judicious, and of best repute among them, either for Piety or Learning; and it will be found, that they have more Books of Church of *England* Divines, and other forraign Divines who own Communion with her, than of any others? And yet for all this shall I be so uncharitably judged, and my Friends who go along with me, as a sort of Apostates, and as having bad Ends and Designs, and as some of them (I hear) suggest against me, that I do it for a Living. I pray God forgive their uncharitable Judgment. I neither was nor yet am so hard put to it for a worldly Living, as some imagine, and as others wish and desire, I mean of my Adversaries among the *Quakers*, who have Prophecied of my outward as well as inward Ruine, and longed to have their false Prophecies accomplished against me; but God hath hitherto disappointed them, and preserved me and mine from Ruine both inwardly and outwardly, for which I bless his Name, and I hope he will preserve me to the End. Why should the Expectation of a Living incline me more to the Church of *England*, than to the Dissenters? Had I joyned with them, I might have got a Living among them, perhaps more *plentifully by the Peoples Gratuities*, than by a *Set maintenance in the Church of* England.

Which last way of living I think is the more Honourable, and less obnoxious to many great Temptations, and every way as suitable to the Gospel.

I find that the Church of God in Scripture is compared to an Army, whose Captain is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, called the Captain of our Salvation. Now suppose there were two Armies in the Field, the one very great and numerous, the other far less in Number, as suppose the one Thirty thousand, the other Ten, pray tell me, whether it is not more safe for us all, who are concerned in one common Cause,

against the common Enemy, to keep within the Body of the Army, even in several Parties to struggle and keep off the Foe from it, or Enemies by themselves? This is our present Case, both the Church of England, and all called *Protestant Dissenters*, profess to be concerned in the common Cause against *Papists*, *Turks* and *Jews*, *Deists* and *Atheists*, and others guilty of vile *Heresies* in Spiritual Matters. Is it not therefore more prudent and safe, to unite together in one Body of Christian Society and Communion against the common Enemy, that we may be the stronger, especially seeing the differences between the Church of *England* and the more judicious and moderate of the *Dissenters*, are not in any Materials (either of Doctrine or Worship, but the very same, as they have Confessed)? Have not these Divisions and Separations had bad Effects, wounded the Protestant Interest, strengthned the Papists, yea, and Deists, and Atheists, and loose and scandalous Persons, who take occasion to say, there is no true Religion on either side, by observing the great Heats and Animosities, and bitter Prejudices of the differing Parties?

I will now come to answer what I think they will object mainly against my Reason above given. They will tell us, that if the parity or *equality* on both Sides were the same, my Reason would be good; but they will alledge there is a great disparity and inequality, the Dissenters having the Advantage in several Particulars, as 1*st*. in Doctrine, 2*dly*. in manner of Worship, 3*dly*. in administration of the Sacraments, 4*thly*. Church Government, which (by the Dissenters) is more agreeable to Scripture among them, than in the Church of *England*. To every one of which I think to say something, as briefly as I can. And First, as to the Doctrine, as touching the Articles of Faith (the Quakers excepted) they profess to be one with the Church of *England*, and have signed, or profess themselves willing to sign to her Articles. *Secondly*, as to the manner of Worship, which the Dissenters contend for, should be wholly by an *extempore* Gift of the Spirit, whereas the Church of *England*, though she alloweth that Ministers before and after Sermon may Pray (without a Set Form, either read, or repeated from the bare Memory) by using their sanctified Parts, and Gifts of Understanding, to Conceive Prayer by the Help of the Spirit, yet She is not only for the Lawfulness of Set Forms of Prayer, composed by Pious Men of Spiritual Abilities, both ancient and late, but for the great Conveniency and Profitableness of them, yea and Necessity of them in many respects, in the Publick Worship of God, leaving every one to their Christian Freedom, whether to use or not use Set Forms in their Closet and Private Devotions.

But

But to this I say, The most Pious as well as Judicious, whom the Dissenters esteem so, and repute as their Fathers; and others that repute them not so, yet will allow that they were very holy and spiritual Men, have owned the Lawfulness of Set Forms of Prayer; yea not only the Lawfulness, but the great Convenience and Necessity of them in the Publick Worship of God. *Calvin*, one of the most famous of the Protestant Reformers was for them, as I proved to you some time ago, out of his express words in his Letter to the Protector of *England*, Epist. 87. The Protestant Churches abroad in *Germany*, *Holland*, *Poland*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, and *France*, from the beginning of the Reformation to this very day, have used Set Forms of Prayer and Thanksgiving in their Publick Worship. And yet I think the Dissenters here will not conclude, that their Worship was wholly carnal dead, and without Life or Spirit, as many of them do now argue against the publick Prayers of the Church of *England*. The Life and Spirituality of Prayer does not consist in the Mode or Form of the words, whether Set or Extempore, say all sound and judicious Christians, but in the Purity, and Fervour of the Affections.

Quod ad formulam precum, &c. As to the Form of Prayers, and Ecclesiastical Rites, [Note] that I greatly approve that it be certain, from which it may not be lawful for Pastors to depart in their Function, both to guard against the Simplicity and Unskilfulness of some, and also, that the Consent of all the Churches among themselves may be more certainly known. And lastly, to Put a Check to the insolent Liberty of some who affect certain Innovations.

——So then it behoveth there be a Set [or fixed] Catechism, a Set Administration of Sacraments, also a Set Form of Prayers.

And therefore an *Extempore* Prayer may be very Formal, dead and dry, and a Prayer in a Set Form may be very lively, powerful, and effectual, as the experience of Thousands daily confirm. And suppose the Dissenters would be so uncharitable to judge, that *Calvin*'s Prayers at *Geneva* in Set Forms, and *Luther*'s in *Wittenberg*, and all the other Protestants Prayers in Set Forms, were barely Formal, Carnal, Dead and Dry, and the blessed Protestants Prayers, who died Martyrs in Queen *Mary*'s Reign that used Set Forms, yea many of these now in use (which would be great uncharitableness;) Will they dare to judge so of the publick Prayers of the Church of Christ, that were in Set Forms in the purest Times of Primitive Christianity, from the days of the Apostles, in the Three First Centuries, as is evident from Church History, before Popery was heard of in the World? Or will they be so uncharitable to Censure the publick Prayers of the Jewish Church, in her best and purest Times, who had Set Forms of Worship, both for Prayer and Thanksgiving: And that it was the constant manner of the Jewish

Church, to have a Part of the Publick Worship with the Priests, joining with them in Vocal Prayer with their Mouths and Lips. Both in Prayer and Thanksgiving is clear from many places of Scripture in the Old Testament, where no doubt their Assemblies, both in the Temple, and Synagogues, consisted of a great mixture of good and bad, Sincere and Hypocritical; see *Psal.* 50. 15, 16. This was spoken not to Priests only, but to the People; and *Isa.* 29. 13. where the Lord blam'd not the People simply, for *drawing near to God with their Mouth*, and *honouring him with their Lips*; but that while they did give him that outward Part of Worship, they had removed their *Heart far from him*, and gave him not the internal as well as the external Part of Worship; the internal being as the Soul, and the external as the Body of it. This clearly shews, what the manner of their Publick Worship then was, and that the People that assembled did really Pray Vocally with the Priests; and that they did Offer unto God the Calves of their Lips, according to *Hos.* 14. 2. And in like manner, the Christians in their Assemblies are commanded to Offer up unto God the Fruit of their Lips, *Heb.* 13. 15. and though the Sacrifice of Praise is there only mentioned, yet no doubt Prayer is also understood, and is as real a Duty for the People to practise, as that of Praise; and if People may Sing with the Spirit, and yet use Set Forms, as they do in Singing *David's* Psalms in Publick Congregations all of them, [some Anabaptists excepted] why may they not Pray with the Spirit in Set Forms? If the Set Form quench not the Spirit in Singing, why should it be supposed to do it in Praying?

It is indeed one of the chiefest Reasons that perswade me, that in the Publick Worship of God Set Forms are necessary, because the People ought to have a Part of the external Worship, as well as the internal, by Confessing, Praying, and giving thanks in Common with their Mouths and Lips, as in believing in one Common Faith, with their Hearts, being a holy Priesthood unto God, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5.

And whereas they say, the Ministers Mouth when he Prays, is the Peoples Mouth unto God in Publick Prayer.

As this is allowed that sometimes so it is, but to say it is always, and must be always so, is without ground, yea, is hurtful and prejudicial, for so, as God is denied that external Service from the People that is due to him, of Adoration, the People is deprived of that which is their Privilledge and a great Benefit unto them, to speak unto God by themselves, (and not by a Proxy always) when they Pray. And if Prayer with the Mouth be a Duty in Private for all Christian People, it is no less a Duty, or rather much more, in Publick.

We

We are Commanded to Confeſs with the Mouth, as well as Believe with our Heart, to hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith, the Greek word in both places ſignifies a joint Confeſſion, *ſimul dicere*, to ſay together. How ſhould we know one anothers Faith, that we hold it faſt, but by holding faſt the Profeſſion of it, in joining together in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, Vocally and with word of Mouth, to Confeſs what we Believe, as we are Commanded, and as with one Mind, ſo with one Mouth to Glorifie God, *Rom.* 15. 6. This one Mind, is the Conſent and Harmony of many Minds; and therefore the one Mouth, is not one ſimple Mouth of the Miniſter, no more than it is one ſingle Mind of the Miniſter; but the Conſent and Harmony of many Mouths, even of the whole Congregation.

There is a greater Advantage and Benefit in Vocal Prayer by the Organs of Speech, when duly performed both in Private and Publick, than many do well underſtand, and eſpecially in Publick; both for their own good, and the good of others. Although our Prayers neither Vocal nor Mental, move God properly ſpeaking, yet they move our ſelves and others; and if the Spirit of God aſſiſt in our Vocal Prayers, as we have cauſe to believe he doth ſo aſſiſt all good Chriſtians, though not in that manner as he did the Prophets, that Motion kindles a Celeſtial Fire both in our ſelves, and others that hear us; and if one Mouth ſo divinely moved kindles a little, many Mouths ſo moved will kindle a great deal. St. *James* tells us, the *Tongues of wicked Men are ſet on the Fire of Hell*; and that *one Tongue is like a little Spark of Fire that kindles a great matter*, *James* 3. 5. And why may not we as well conclude that the Tongues of Godly Men are enkindled with Fire from Heaven. Yea it ſtands with good reaſon, that Holy Angels who are preſent in the Aſſemblies of the Faithful, are moved with the Vocal Prayers and Praiſes of the Faithful in the Church, whereby they know our inward States and Thoughts, as Men know our Thoughts by our Words, when we ſincerely expreſs them; for Angels know not our Thoughts immediately, but mediately either by audible words, or by ſome ſoft and gentle motion of our bodily Organs of Speech: Alſo it ſtands with good reaſon from Scripture Authority, that our bleſſed Mediatour Jeſus Chriſt, not as he is God, but as he is Man in our Nature, now in Heaven glorified, is really moved and affected with the Prayers, both Mental and Vocal, of the Faithful, *Heb.* 4. 15. We find in the *Revelations*, that after the four Living Creatures, *i. e.* the Body of the Church, had ſung together their Antheme, the Twenty Four Elders, *i. e.* the Governours, anſwered with their Antiphone; and the Angels anſwered both with theirs, *Rev.* 4. 8, 9, 10. compared with *Rev.* 5. from *ver.* 8. to 12.

Now

Now if the People in the Publick Worſhip ſhould have a Part, joining in Vocal Prayer and Thankſgiving with the Miniſter, and anſwering him, ſometimes by ſaying *Amen*, ſometimes by other fit and ſuitable words, this muſt needs be in Set Forms that both are agreed in, and know beforehand, otherwiſe either the People muſt be tied to his Form, which however *Extempore* to him, and free, yet to them is a Limitation and Reſtriction, as much and much leſs fair, than to be tied to a Form they had formerly known, and been acquainted with, or elſe we muſt ſuppoſe a Miracle to be wrought every time they Pray Vocally together, if every of them, or any two of them Pray *extempore* in the ſame Form of words, without receiving it the one from the other.

To plead for uſing a new Form, or Method of words in Prayer every time that Men Pray, is as improper and impertinent as to plead, that every time we Eat we muſt have a new Diſh or Platter, to Eat out of; and every time we drink, we muſt have a new Cup to drink out of, and if every day, yea as oft every day as we Pray, we muſt uſe a new *extempore* Form, we may as well plead every day, we muſt ſeveral times each day, put on New Shoes, and New Apparel; which as it would be great waſte, ſo would it be very uneaſie. The method of words in Prayer, whether *extempore*, or in a Set Form, is as remote an Accident to the ſubſtance of Prayer, either for Matter or Life, as a Diſh or a Platter is to the Meat put into it, or a Cup to the Drink that is in it; the ſame Meat may be as good as when put into another Diſh, and the Drink as good as in another Cup; and as ſeveral Habits of Garments may ſuit the ſame Perſon, ſo ſeveral Forms of Prayer, with reſpect to the external Form, may ſuit the ſame Prayer, both as to Matter and Life. As Grace doth ſometimes cauſe a variety in our words of Prayer, when the Matter is the ſame, ſo meer humane Art can, and doth moſt frequently cauſe a variety, for by meer humane Art, ſix words can be varied ſome hundreds of times, and yet the matter remain the ſame: It is therefore a great miſtake in many who think, they who pray in greateſt variety of words and modes of expreſſion, they Pray moſt by the Spirit, or with Grace; for as it can be done by meer Art without Grace, ſo it frequently is ſo done; and thereby many are greatly deceived, eſpecially when it is Varniſhed with great ſeeming ſhews of Fervour, by geſtures and tones, that move and ſtir the natural and animal Paſſions and Affections.

But I remember I have heard two or three things objected by ſome againſt the matter of Common Prayer. 1. Where the People ſay, *There is no Health in us.* But that is no more offenſive, then what the Scripture ſaith,

faith, *That it is not in Man to direct his Steps*, p. 6. It is not in Man as of himself, but of the Lord; so there is no *health in us*, nor in any Man, but what is of God and Christ. It is not in us originally, but by derivation and participation from God and Christ, in whom all fullneſs dwells, and of whoſe fullneſs we all receive, and Grace for Grace. 2. That they ſtill are praying from Seven to Seventy, *Lord be merciful to us miſerable Offenders*; but this I think is only made by the Quakers, all others confeſs that they are Sinners, and conſequently, as in themſelves, miſerable, and continually needing God's mercy; for as St. *James* ſaid, *in many things we offend all*; and as St. *John* ſaith, *if we ſay we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves; but if we confeſs our Sins, &c.* The Church of God in all Ages have confeſſed their Sins; and the holieſt Men have done ſo, as *Daniel*, *Eſdras*, &c. The great remiſſion of Sins in the moſt ſolemn and publick manner, is reſerved to the day of Judgment, that great day of Aſſiſe; what remiſſion the beſt now have, is but like the Criminal's Pardon from the King, that he has by himſelf in ſecret; that is not ſo Authentick till it be proclaimed in open Court at the Aſſiſe. 3. Some object againſt that expreſſion in the *Common Prayer*, *We are tied and bound with the chain of our Sins.* But I think none of the Diſſenters (the Quakers excepted) can well ſo object; many of whom commonly in their Prayers ſay, *They muſt carry about with them a Body of Sin and Death to the Grave*; which I think is more then what is here objected againſt. I think it were more ſafe and warrantable according to Scripture to ſay, that ſome remainders of Sin remain in the Faithful, eſpecially with reſpect to the Original Defilement by *Adam*'s Fall, as alſo with reſpect to ſome remaining part of thoſe Habits of Sin we had contracted by our actual Tranſgreſſions, than that the Body of Sin remains in them, if they underſtand it, of the whole Body or Complex of vitious Habits contracted by actual Sins, which the Saints are ſaid to have put off by Regeneration, as, when the Body or Bulk of a great Tree is cut down, with its Boughs, Branches, Twigs and Bearers, yet the Stump and Root, or ſome part of it remains in the Ground, which if due care be not taken continually to mortify, ſuppreſs, and ſubdue, would ſpring up again, to which that in *Hebr.* 12. 15. ſeems plainly to refer, and with reſpect to ſuch a remaining Part, root or ſeed of Sin, in the Faithful, it is ſaid by St. *John*, 1 *John* 1. 8. *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us.* This remainder of Sin God hath ſeen meet to ſuffer to remain in the Faithful (though he pardoneth the Guilt of it, and hath promiſed to give them ſufficiency of his Grace, whereby ſtill they may be able to mortify and ſubdue it) for the tryal of their Faith, and the Exercile of both their Faith, and all other their Graces and Vir-

tues,

tues, in the way of Spiritual Conflict and Warfare, against three great Enemies, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; that so through the Victory that the Faithful obtain by the Victorious Power of God's Grace, their Reward may be the greater, (which yet is still the Free Gift of God) according to 2 *Tim.* 2. 5. *And if a Man also strive for Mastries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* Not that Sin either in less or more, is any proper Cause of the increase of our Virtues, yet as in natural Effects one natural Agent commonly works the more powerfully in the presence of a contrary Agent, if that contrary Agent be not too powerful, its Agency serving but to excite the other the more effectually against it; as Heat is increased by Cold, and a little Water cast into Fire increaseth the Flame. Now that this remaining part, root, or seed of Sin, with what other is contracted by the daily indeliberate, and for the most part, involuntary infirmities that the Faithful are obnoxious to, may be said to be a Chain, whereby they are tied and bound, in part, though as to the main, they are looſed, and set free from the reign and prevalency of Sin, by the virtue and prevalency of God's Grace; as when a Man that has been bound Hands and Feet, and in his whole Body, by strong Fetters of Iron, is looſed from the greatest and heaviest of them in his whole Body and Members, yet some less Chain or Chains remain, that though they neither do nor can hinder his acting and walking, yet do in part incommode and retard him. This is fitly represented by what is reported of that holy Man *Anselm*'s observation of a Shepherd Boy, that had tied a small Stone with a small Thred, to the Foot of a small Bird, and then let it out of his hand looſe to fly. The small Bird did fly but a little at a time, being incommoded and retarded with the weight of the Stone, though but little, flying a little, and resting a little; now mounting upwards as if it would fly straightway to Heaven; but then soon after descending to the Earth; which that holy Man beholding, made the Emblem of the State of his Soul, and fell into Weeping, saying to this effect, *What the little Stone is to this little Bird, that my Sin that hangs about me is to me.*

To the *Third*, The Administration of the Sacraments; wherein do they suppoſe, that the Dissenters have any advantage above the Church of *England*? they will say, that they add nothing to Christ's Institution in Baptism, whereas the Church of *England* adds the Sign of the Cross, and at the receiving the Lord's Supper they receive it kneeling; to this I answer, the Church of *England* makes not the Sign of the Cross, any part of Baptism, for she doth not order it to be used at private Baptism to any that is in danger of Death, nor does she make it any Means of Grace, but a *convenient Symbole* to put us in mind, and also to signify, that we own Christ that was crucified on the Tree of the Cross,

and

and are not ashamed to confess him, the Captain of our Salvation, and manfully to fight under his Banner, against Sin, the World, and the Devil, &c. which has but the like Service that a Cross drawn with Ink on Paper, has to signify the Cross of Wood, that he was crucified upon, and is but a sort of Hieroglyphick, neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture, but simply indifferent; and that our Superiors both Ecclesiastick and Civil, have Authority to command us in the use of indifferent Things, I am well satisfied, and I see not but so ought the Dissenters to acknowledge, who grant that our Superiors both Ecclesiastical and Civil may enjoin the keeping of a Fast Day for publick Calamities, or a Festival Day of Thanksgiving for publick Mercies. *Baxter* makes no more hurt in using the sign of the Cross in Baptism, than if we should tie a piece of Thred to our Finger to keep us in mind of what we desire to remember.

That the Lord's Supper is received kneeling, has no more Ceremony nor hurt in it, than that we pray kneeling, for both the Minister that gives, and the People that receives the Elements of Bread and Wine, do it with Prayer.

For all the great Clamour against the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, I scarcely find any more but one, that may be so called, to wit, that abovementioned, the sign of the Cross at Baptism, which is a very harmless, and a very ancient Practise in the Church of Christ, and had a warrantable Original, that because the Heathens upbraided the Christians with the Cross, to show, they were not ashamed of it, after receiving Baptism, they received the sign of the Cross on their Foreheads, nor is that occasion wanting in our Day, where so many Thousands here in this Nation, on the pretence of high Divine Inspirations, have cast away the Profession of Faith in Christ, as he was outwardly Crucified, together with the Memorials of him, Baptism, and the Supper.

And as concerning Infant Baptism time will not permit at present, that I should insist on it; but this I say, I am fully satisfied with the Baptism I had in Infancy, and I do believe that it as duly belongeth to the Infant Children of Believers under the New Testament, being a seal to them of God's Covenant of Grace for remission of Sin, as Circumcision did belong to such under the Old Testament, for God is no less merciful to Believers and their Children now, than he was then.

I cannot but think strange, that there should be such a Clamour against the Ceremonies in the Church of *England*, having upon enquiry, found them so few. I lately met with a Book of one of the Church of *England*, wherein I found him having the same Thought with mine, that there is but one Ceremony in the Church of *England*, viz: the sign

of the Croſs, and ſtrictly ſpeaking, I ſee no need why it ſhould be called a Ceremony, this hard Word offends many ignorant People, why may not our Superiors Eccleſiaſtick and Civil enjoin ſome Things that are meerly Circumſtantial, and in themſelves indifferent, as to the Habit of Miniſter's Cloathing, and the Uſe of a Surplice in Divine Service, of the Decency and Conveniency of which they are more proper Judges than private Perſons, as well as they are generally allowed to determine other Circumſtances of Time and Place, and various Actions, relating to both Religious and Civil Matters. To bury in Woollen, and to lay the dead in a Coffin, to lay a Cloth, or Cuſhen on the Pulpit, to ring a Bell before Sermon, to have a Glock or Hour-glaſs before the Miniſter's Face when he Preacheth, which the *Quakers* cry out againſt as much as others do againſt the Surplice, and ſign of the Croſs, to have a clean Linnen Cloth on the Communion Table, and Silver Platter and Cup, for the diſtributing the Elements of Bread and Wine at the Lord's Supper, all theſe and divers other Things the Diſſenters commonly allow, as well as the Church of *England*, ſome of them, by command of Superiors, others of them by Cuſtom, why do they not call them Ceremonies, and fright the People with that hard Word?

Laſtly, as to the Government of the Church, the Diſſenters are ſo far from having the Advantage of the Church of *England*, that ſhe hath the Advantage over them, in that as well as in the other Things abovementioned.

That in all Societies both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, there ſhould be an Order and Superiority of Officers, Rulers and Governours, Nature it ſelf teacheth it. How can a City or Nation be ruled and kept in Order, if all the Rulers be equal? How can an Army be governed, or diſciplined, or led forth to Battel without divers Degrees, Superior and Inferior of Military Officers, if all the Captains of each ſingle Company, conſiſting ſuppoſe of one hundred Men each ſingle Company, and the whole Army conſiſting of many Thouſands, if theſe ſingle Captains had no ſuperior Officers over them, but every one left to his own Diſcretion, to lead on his Company to Battle againſt the common Enemy, who has all in good Order, and a due and regular Diſtinction of ſuperior and inferiour Officers, how can it be ſuppoſed, but that the Army that has this good Order and Diſtinction of various Officers, ſuperior and inferior, ſhould prevail againſt the other that hath no ſuch Order and Diſtinction. We may ſee a wonderful order of Superiority and Inferiority in all Things in the whole viſible Creation, in the Heavens and Elements; and that there is the like Superiority in the inviſible Creation, of Angels and Spirits, the Scripture doth plainly inform us,

as

as Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim; *Jethro Moſes*'s Father-in-Law, adviſed him to ſet Captains over Tens, over Fifties, over Hundreds, and over Thouſands of the People of *Iſrael*, for the better and eaſier Government of them, both in War and Peace; and *Moſes* hearkned to his Advice, *Exod.* 18. 24. And we find in Scripture, that the Church is compared to an Army, and the Members thereof to Soldiers; the chief General and Captain whereof is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath appointed divers Officers in his Church under the New Teſtament, diſtinct not only in degree, but in kind, as Biſhops, Presbyters (otherwiſe called Prieſts) and Deacons anſwerable to the three Officers that were in the Church of the Jews under the Old Teſtament, to wit, the high Prieſt, Prieſts and Levites; and becauſe they were but one Nation, all living within a ſmall Compaſs of Ground, one High Prieſt did ſuffice, according to God's Appointment.

This threefold diſtinction of Church Government by Biſhops, Presbyters and Deacons, upon a further ſearch into the New Teſtament, I find ſo very clear as doth fully ſatisfie me, notwithſtanding that by prejudice of Education I was formerly Principled againſt it; and alſo by ſearching into Church-Hiſtory, and the Writings of the Ancients, neareſt to the Apoſtles Times, and the ſucceeding Ages, in the pureſt and beſt State of the Churches, as well as when there was a great declining from that purity, yet as many other things both of ſound Doctrine, and good practice ſtill remained; ſo this diſtinction of Church Rulers did all along remain, generally in all Places, as well as in all Ages, where God had any Viſible Church, or where there was any Society of People, profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, until the beginning of the Reformation, where in divers Countries abroad, there was no Proteſtant Kings, the Proteſtants ſet up Churches without Biſhops (not rejecting the Office, nor condemning it as unlawful or Antichriſtian, as ſome in late Times have done) but excuſing the want of it by that general maxim, *Neceſſity has no Law.* I need not inſiſt to prove the diſtinction of Presbyters and Deacons out of the New Teſtament, it being (in ſome ſort) generally acknowledged by the Diſſenters. But the Superiority of Biſhops over Presbyters, is that which is condemned by ſome as Antichriſtian, and by ſome others judged at beſt unneceſſary, and no part of Chriſtian Diſcipline, belonging to Chriſtianity either eſſential or integral. But if you will lay aſide all prejudice of Education, and uncharitableneſs, you will clearly and evidently ſee it in the Holy Scriptures. That the Apoſtles had a Superiority over not only the LXX, but all other Miniſters and Paſtors, or Teachers, is very clear from 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. compared with *Eph.* 4. 11.

That Bishops were to succeed the Apostles, and have the like Office both with them, as Churches came to be planted in divers parts of the World before their Decease, and also after their Decease; not with respect to the extraordinary gifts of Prophecy and Miracles, but with respect to the Government of the Church by a regular Succession, is evident from *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. compared with the above-cited *Eph.* 4. 11. otherwise all standing or setled Ministry, as an Ordinance of Christ, may be rejected, as Enthusiasts generally do, yea what can these Governments be, mentioned 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. but as really the Superiority of Bishops over Presbyters, as of Presbyters over the Deacons, and the People; otherwise why Governments in the Plural Number? Also what are these Dignities mentioned *Jud.* 8. that some despised in the Apostles days? and 2 *Pet.* 2. 10, 11. And how should any doubt of the Office of Episcopacy, being an Ordinance of Christ in the Church, when the qualifications requisite to such an Officer are so expresly set down, 1 *Tim.* 3. from *v.* 1. *to v.* 8. But whereas it is objected, that seeing there is only mentioned in that Chapter a twofold Order, 1. Of Bishops, 2. Of Deacons, it would seem, that Presbyters are there understood by Bishops, otherwise Presbyters should be wholly excluded from Church Government.

I answer, that will not follow, 1. Because Presbyters, though not expressed, yet may be understood, and implied, under either the one or the other expresly mentioned; the name Deacon being sometimes a general Name in Scripture, signifying the most superiour, as well as inferiour Officers in the Church, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. St. *Paul* called himself and *Apollo* by the Name of Deacons, as it is in the Greek; and 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. he calls all Ministers and Teachers at large by that Name. But 2. in the order of things there were but these two Officers at first (excepting the Apostles) *Bishops*, and *Deacons*. The Churches in many places at first being small, the *Bishop* could both sufficiently teach, and rule his Flock, and so did, without Presbyters, only by the assistance of Deacons; but the number of the Flock increasing, he did chuse, and raise up those that had well used the Office of a Deacon, to the higher degree of Presbyters, which is called by St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 13. a good degree, which they purchased to themselves, even as those that well used the Office of a Presbyter were afterwards raised up to the Office of a Bishop, as was accordingly practised in the Church, so that in priority of Nature, and also of Time, the Deacon is before the Presbyter, though in priority of Dignity, the Presbyter is before the Deacon. Hence according to the Order established in the Church, none is to be ordained a Presbyter, until he first be ordained a Deacon; nor can he at one and the same time, be Ordained to be both.

The

The Diſtinction and Superiority of Biſhops over Presbyters or Elders, is very clear to me, as well as to many, out of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. I. St. *Paul* writes to *Timothy*, to Command, or give in Charge to ſome that were Teachers at *Epheſus*, to teach no other Doctrine, than the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel, ſuch as he had heard of him. And had not *Timothy* had a Superiority of Office above other Teachers, which were then at *Epheſus*, why did he direct both his Epiſtles to him only, laying down excellent rules, and method of Government for him to follow, in the exerciſe of his Epiſcopal Function, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. with reſpect to ſeveral States of Perſons both Male and Female?

II. Why did St. *Paul* give the Charge to *Timothy* to count the Elders that ruled well, (which were no doubt under him) worthy of double Honour, eſpecially them who laboured in Word and Doctrine, but that he was able to confer that double Honour upon them; a part of which was an Honourable Maintenance, according to what follows, *ver.* 18. for the Scripture ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the Ox that treadeth out the Corn; and the Labourer is worthy of his reward.* By this it is plain, that it belonged to *Timothy*, being the Biſhop of *Epheſus*, (as he is expreſly called the Firſt Biſhop of *Epheſus*, at the end of the ſecond Epiſtle to him) to whom the Church Treaſure, (made up of the Gifts of the People) was entruſted, to provide for the Presbyters under him, a neceſſary Maintenance, which manner of practice continued in the Church, the Biſhops having the diſpoſe of the Churches Treaſure, within their ſeveral Precincts, during all that time the Church had no Chriſtian Magiſtrate to Countenance her, and long after.

III. He writes to him as an Eccleſiaſtick Ruler and Judge, that had power to hear and examine Accuſations brought againſt Presbyters, and accordingly to judge, after due Evidence of two or three Witneſſes; which plainly ſhews his Power of Juriſdiction over Presbyters, 1 *Tim.* 5. 19.

IV. He gives him a moſt ſolemn Charge before God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Elect Angels, that in the exerciſe of the Power of Judicatory, he act impartially, without Favour, or biaſs of Affection, not preferring one before another, *ver.* 21.

V. He writes to him, as one having Power of Ordination, to Ordain Elders by laying on of Hands; and cautions him, to lay hands ſuddenly on no Man, *ver.* 22.

VI. He writes to him in his ſecond Epiſtle, to ſtir up the gift of God that was in him by the putting on of his Hands, together with the Hands of the Presbytery or Elderſhip, *viz.* ſome other Apoſtles that might jointly with St. *Paul*, lay Hands on him, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. for that the Preſbytery

bytery here mentioned was a Colledge only of Presbyters, is a bare alledgment, *viz.* when he ordained him the first Bishop of *Ephesus*, as appears from the end of the second Epistle, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6.

VII. He willeth him, that he commit to faithful Men who shall be able to teach others also, those Things that he had heard of him, among many Witnesses, which behoved to be some peculiar Things relating in great part to Rules of Discipline and Church Government, which were not fit either for Heathens to hear, or Novices in the Faith, who yet might hear the common Doctrines of the *Christian Faith*, preached in the *Christian Assemblies*.

VIII. Writing to *Titus*, he presupposeth him Bishop of the *Cretians*, as appears from the end of the Epistle to him, and tells him why he left him in *Crete*, *That he should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City as he had appointed him.* I know no reason why these should be thought *Lay-Elders*, *i. e.* such as were not to Preach, I find none such, either here or any where else in the New Testament. How could *Titus* exercise this Authority in such a spacious Island, where many Cities were, and Christian Congregations set up, if he had been only a single Presbyter? And if the other Presbyters had equal Power with him, why did not he write to him and them jointly? Whether in the Ordination of Presbyters, others jointly did not lay on Hands with the Bishop, is not the present question; but whether it is to be found in Scripture or Church History, that any Number or Colledge of Presbyters, Ordained any without a Bishop presiding over them?

IX. He telleth him, that the Mouths of such Teachers as were unruly and vain Talkers, and Deceivers, and who taught things which they ought not, for filthy lucre sake, must be stopped; which plainly shews his Authority to depose and silence false Teachers, as well as to Ordain Sound and Worthy.

X. He telleth him of his Authority to judge, who is a Heretick, and how after the first and second Admonition, (if he amend not) he ought to reject him.

By these Instances plainly collected out of the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, it may I think appear, to all impartial persons that well and duly consider them, that both *Timothy* and *Titus* were Bishops, and had a Superiority of Power and Jurisdiction over the Presbyters in the Churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, as well as of Ordination.

I know *W. Prynne* hath printed a Book, which he called the *Unbishoping of Timothy and Titus*, which I have read; but I find not that he hath either sufficiently answered the Arguments brought from Scripture, to prove that they were Bishops, or given any sufficient Arguments to the con-

contrary. I have alſo ſeen another great Book of his, giving a Hiſtorical Relation of the evil Practiſes of many Biſhops, all which if true, ſaith nothing againſt the Office. But I could write a great Book, [threefold greater] giving a Hiſtorical Relation of many good Things, Biſhops have done in the World. Many Biſhops both in the early and latter Ages, have been eminently exemplary in Holineſs of Life, and all *Chriſtian* Virtues; and for divers Ages ſucceeding the *Apoſtle*'s Days, were bleſſed and happy Inſtruments, to preſerve the Truth and Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, in the World, and the Unity and Peace of the many Churches in it, hindring Schiſms, and curing them that did threaten to ariſe. Cutting down with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, [even the Doctrinal Word, outwardly delivered in the Holy Scriptures, as they were mightily aſſiſted by the Holy Spirit ſo to do] the monſtrous and vile Hereſies that ſprung up from time to time, oppugning the Chriſtian Faith, wherein Almighty God bleſſed them with great Succeſs, and this they did partly by their particular Writings, Treatiſes and Epiſtles, as well as Sermons, and partly by their aſſembling in great Numbers, in Synods and Councils, to condemn them, and that many times to the danger of their Lives, under perſecuting Kings and Emperours; ſome whereof were Heathen, and ſome *Arian* and *Eutychian*.

Such who are but ordinarily well acquainted with Antiquity and Church Hiſtory, cannot be ignorant that the Government of the Church from the very days of the Apoſtles in all the famous places of the World, where Chriſtianity came to be planted, was by Succeſſion, the which did lineally deſcend for four hundred years from the Apoſtles days and upwards, and in divers places, to this Age.

There are two places of Scripture in the *Old Teſtament*, which divers of the Fathers underſtood of Epiſcopal Government, as it was to be ſet up in the Church under the *New Teſtament*, as *Pſal.* 45. 16. being a Prophecy concerning Chriſt's Church, and his Government in the ſame by Church Officers. *Inſtead of thy Fathers* [i. e. the Apoſtles, who were the Founders of the *New Teſtament* Church, and were her Fathers] *ſhall be thy Children*, [i. e. their Succeſſors in the Government of the Church after their Deceaſe] *whom thou maieſt make Princes in all the Earth.*

The other Place is in *Iſaiah* 60. 17. *I will appoint them Biſhops in Righteouſneſs, and Deacons or Miniſters in Faith*, as *Clemens* Biſhop of *Rome* quotes it in his famous Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, but as the *Septuagint* hath it, is thus, *And I will give thy Princes in Peace, and thy Biſhops in Righteouſneſs.*

Ignatius

Ignatius who conversed with St. *John* the Apostle, and as his Disciple, and Bishop of *Antioch*, being constituted by him, writeth thus to the Church of *Smyrna*, *let the People be subject unto their Deacons, the Deacons to the Presbyters, the Presbyters to the Bishop, and the Bishop to Christ, as he is to his Father.* *Policarp* also was constituted by St. *John*, Bishop of *Smyrna*, who both suffered Martyrdom, as Church History giveth account. *Irenæus* saith, *lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. *We have to reckon them, who were appointed Bishops by the Apostles in the Churches, and their Successors even unto us.* This *Irenæus* was Bishop at *Lyons*, and lived within about a hundred years after St. *John*. It is acknowledged both by antient Writers, and later; yea by some *Calvinists*, and particularly by *David Pareus*, that the seven Angels of the seven Churches of *Asia*, to whom St. *John* wrote, were the seven Bishops set over those seven Churches; also it is very probable that St. *John* himself had planted all these seven Churches, and did constitute the Bishops in them.

Habemus annumerare eos, qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis & Successores eorum usque ad nos.

Hieron, whom the Adversaries of Episcopacy think that he favoureth in opposition to the Episcopal Authority, plainly granteth that the Power of Ordination is lodg'd in the Bishop, saying *quid enim facit excepta ordinatione Episcopus, quod Presbyter non faciat*, i.e. *for what doth the Bishop, that the Presbyter may not, or ought not to do, except Ordination.* *Epist. ad Evagrium.* And the same affirmeth, *that from Mark the Evangelist, until* Heraclas *and* Dionisius *Bishops there, the Presbyters of* Alexandria *did name him Bishop, one among themselves elected, and placed in a higher degree, but he doth not say that they ordained him.*

And both *Hieron* and *Clemens Romanus* long before [illegible] make a paralel betwixt the High Priests, Priests and Levites in the Jewish Church, and Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in the New Testament Church, *what Aaron and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple (saith he) the same in the Church may Bishops and Presbyters, and Deacons, challenge unto themselves.* *Hier. ad Evgr.* And how universal the extent of Episcopacy was in all the Churches, and to what end it was appointed, the further declareth in that same Epistle, *it was decreed in the whole world, that one chosen out of the Presbyters should be placed above the rest, to whom all care of the Church should belong, and so the Seeds of Schism be removed.*

Thus far I think I have made it appear, that in none of the Particulars abovementioned, the Dissenters have any advantage above the Church of *England*; but that what advantage there is to be found either from Scripture, or Church History, and Antiquity, lieth on her side.

FINIS.